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with a foreword by MARY CLARKE

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EDITORIAL COMMENT

SADLER'S Wells Ballet are back at Covent Garden and to thousands of ballet lovers London is itself again. Their first appearance on February 21st after five months in the United States and Canada was also the fifth anniversary of the re-opening of the Royal Opera House and Princess Elizabeth graced the occasion with her presence. Warmed by a reception which the Prologue of *The Sleeping Beauty* does not often receive, the whole company gave a performance of much greater liveliness than has sometimes been the case in the past. Margot Fonteyn's first entrance was greeted with such an ovation that she danced to the cheers and applause, the music being completely inaudible. I thought she seemed a little tense all through the Rose Adagio but from then on she settled down to one of her most superb performances and the *grand pas de deux* was never grander. No wonder Princess Elizabeth leaned forward and cried "Bravo"!

I was particularly pleased to notice how well the six Cavaliers in the Prologue danced together; they are now a pleasure to watch. The other outstanding dancing performance of the evening was Violetta Elvin's Bluebird. Rassine also was dancing better in this *pas de deux* than he was last year.

Altogether it was an exciting evening to treasure in one's memory. In her charming curtain speech Dame Ninette de Valois told us that the company were always far more nervous of their first performance before a London audience than they were anywhere else in the world. "*When we go abroad we are a novelty. In London we are a habit.*" That is so very true and it does account for the dullness we sometimes find in performances and which the dancers certainly find in our response during a long season with so small a repertoire; but on a night such as this we all find fresh stimulation and, I feel, deserve our reputation as the finest ballet company and the best audience in the western world.

Unfortunately the second performance two days later proved as flat as the first was thrilling. Possibly everyone on both sides of the footlights was suffering from reaction. At any rate "habit" was uppermost and the dancers found it difficult to arouse the house to anything approaching enthusiasm. Perhaps one reason was that the promised "second cast" hardly

HAROLD TURNER IN THE FILM "THE DANCING FLEECE" MADE BY CROWN FILM UNIT FOR THE NATIONAL WOOL TEXTILE EXPORT CORPORATION AND THE BOARD OF TRADE

materialised owing to illness in the company. (We must expect this in view of their exhaustion after so strenuous a tour and the very short rest before the re-opening in London). Almost the only change, apart from the all-important one of the two principals, was the Bluebird *pas de deux*, and after hearing so much about the enthusiasm engendered by Brian Shaw's performance in America I think we all expected a great deal more than we received. Granted that the present costume is one of the ugliest ever seen and particularly unfortunate for a dancer so heavily built in the chest and shoulders, the dancing itself was a big disappointment. He has considerable *ballon* but little elevation and the Bluebird must have both.

Moira Shearer was struggling with the appendicitis to which she subsequently succumbed so it is hardly fair to pass final judgment on her Aurora which was exquisite in its delicacy but without light and shade in its phrasing, or warmth and breadth in its conception.

On the first night the lighting was bad and Robert Irving hustled his musicians along at a pace which must at times have been terrifying for the dancers. On the second night the lighting was execrable but the music had settled down to more reasonable *tempi*. The sets were looking understandably battered after their months of travel but the costumes have been either refurbished or renewed and the company was as immaculate as always, with the exception of the young gentleman whose white tights were badly wrinkled on each occasion. P.W.M.

"*The Prospect Before Us*"

HOW wonderful it was to renew acquaintance with Mr. O'Reilly in all his vinous glory on February 13th at Sadler's Wells Theatre and to find him as grand as ever. *The Prospect Before Us* revives extremely well, for although no one could say it was well-constructed, each episode in itself is worked out with great skill, as is the case in all ballets by Ninette de Valois. Constant Lambert's arrangement of music by William Boyce and Roger Furse's decor both seem as admirable as ever, and the young company do extremely well on the whole though they are noticeably less mature in their assumption of characters than were the original cast which was almost the entire 1940 Sadler's Wells Ballet at its then full strength.

The *corps de ballet* is now smaller and there are a few alterations—notably a big cut which shortens the work by several minutes and robs the three lawyers of their chance to make the fullest effect. This cut also makes the action even more muddled: it never was very clear and without the programme notes would be totally incomprehensible. (These notes, incidentally, are themselves by no means models of clarity.) Yet with all its faults of construction *The Prospect Before Us* remains a work which entertains from rise to fall of the curtain.

It is one of the very few English ballets in which the men are better provided for than the girls, though in any case Elaine Fifield as Mademoiselle Theodore, the eighteenth century ballerina, Svetlana Beriosova as the Dancer in the Street Scene and Patricia Miller as Cupid in the period ballet inset into the action, do not come up to Pamela May, Mary Honer and Margaret Dale in the same parts. David Gill showed a real flair for character as Monsieur Noverre and David Blair and Pirmin Trecu danced extremely well as Monsieur Didelot and Monsieur Vestris, the great male dancers of the period, while David Poole as Mr. Taylor the rival theatre manager, stood up amazingly to the formidable task of having to play throughout against that tower-topping Mr. O'Reilly which is one of Helpmann's most glorious creations.

For when all is said and done, *The Prospect Before Us* belongs to Mr. O'Reilly and Mr. O'Reilly belongs to Robert Helpmann. To say that he is superb, stupendous, riotously and excruciatingly funny is to sound almost grudging of praise. One's only possible criticism—and this is the fault of the choreographer—is that Mr. O'Reilly is a theatre manager and would be unlikely to be so bewildered at life back-stage even though ballet was not his province; and he certainly would not have been so carried away by a performance that he jumped on to the stage and mixed himself up with it. If Mr. O'Reilly's actual status (for he existed in real life) were taken away for the purpose of the ballet and he became what we now know as a backer, his behaviour would automatically fall into place. And make no mistake about it—we would not wish to miss a second of it.

Stanley Holden Takes Over

Stanley Holden has now taken over the part of Mr. O'Reilly, appearing for the first time on February 24th. If he was nervous, as he must have been, there was no sign of it in a quietly confident performance which falls into place in the way in which the part was originally conceived so that the uproarious finale once more becomes the climax of the whole work. He will undoubtedly build up his characterisation on its present foundation, but the groundwork is so sound that we may expect something really outstanding in the near future. One might say that *The Prospect Before Us* now returns to its original symphonic form after having been played for years as a concerto. P.W.M.

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JOURNAL OF A JOURNEY (3)

By FRANKLIN WHITE

THE beginning of a new experience for the Company; five weeks of one to three night stands.

Like many things that I find over here, the change from one extreme to the other is very fast. It is broad daylight, and then in not many minutes it is night: poor conditions side by side with the most luxurious: the height of summer heat and next day mid-winter. If it sounded as if the Company was in the height of comfort—sun, luxurious hotels and life in general, along with hard work and its responsibilities (which indeed we mostly were) up until the time we left the West Coast, an equally dramatic change has come over our way of life from then on.

The beginning of a new experience

As if in anticipation of the Company's change in its method of touring, heavy rain and mist descended on the morning of our early departure from San Francisco. Small groups of raincoated dancers stood out in the cutting wind and drizzle on the fore deck of the ferry as we passed under the great structure of the Bay Bridge on the way to the railway terminus at Oakland.

The railway track followed the bay to the estuary of the Sacramento river and then up stream until our destination. It should have been an interesting trip, but once more the previous night's lengthy celebrations had the obvious effect and I woke up in time to leave the train at midday.

We arrived in Sacramento, California, at 12.45 p.m. for two performances at the City Auditorium on November 13th/14th. There had been a slight change in the order of presenting our programmes from the series of short visits prior to the Los Angeles, San Francisco, seasons. Before, it had been three one act ballets and a *pas des deux*, followed on the second night by a complete *Le Lac des Cygnes*. If it was a one night stop it would be just *Le Lac des Cygnes*. Now it varied a lot and the system of alternating casts that we had been rehearsing went into action. The complete second casts in the main are:—

"LES PATINEURS"

Blue Boy	Vernon
Blue Girls	Olrich, Dale (Jackson, Nerina, 1st Cast)
Red Girls	Lynne, Lindsay or Mossford for all casts
White Couple	Ellis, Farron
Brown Girls	Hamby, Shore, Drage, Taylor
Brown Boys	Steuart, Chatfield, Barrett, Ashbridge

"A WEDDING BOUQUET"

Webster	Lynne	Paul	Vernon
Julia	Heaton	Thérèse	Lindsay
Bridegroom	Grant (Hart 1st cast)	Violet	Mossford
Bride	Nerina	Pepe	Walton
Josephine	Hamby	Arthur	Rodrigues
John	White	Guy	Rassine

"THE RAKE'S PROGRESS"

The Rake	Grant (Legerton 1st cast)
The Betrayed Girl	Heaton (Farron and Clayden being the others cast)
Dancing Master	Vernon
Tailor/Sailor	White
Jockey	Clegg
Bravo	Ashbridge
Fencing Master and Mad Card Player	Macmillan
Violinist	Barrett
Man with Rope	Powell

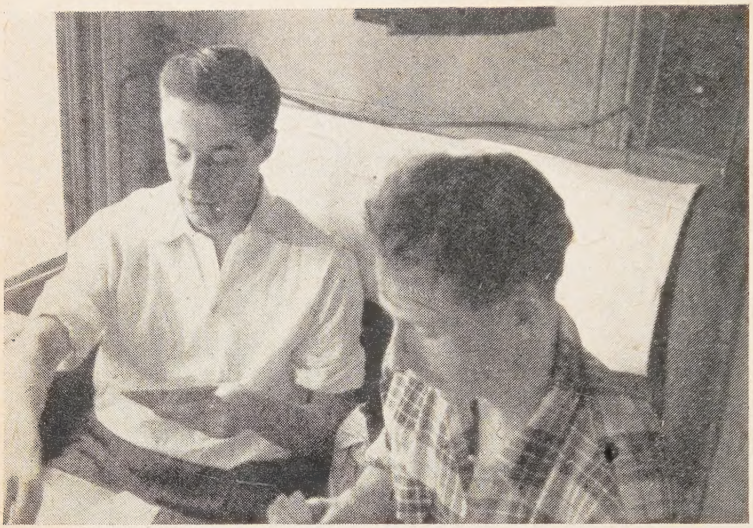
"DANTE SONATA"

Leaders of Light	Heaton, Field
Leaders of Darkness	Grey, Grant

After the first night a party was given at our hotel by the Saturday Orchestra Club, at which I heard that

BERYL GREY HOLDS UP COTTON BUDS FOR PHILIP CHATFIELD, HARIJS PLUCIS (MAITRE DE BALLET) AND BRYAN ASHBRIDGE

Photograph by Franklin White



CANASTA WHILES AWAY SOME LONG HOURS IN THE TRAIN FOR GILBERT VERNON AND HENRY LEGERTON

Photograph by Bryan Ashbridge

someone had flown all the way from Alaska to see just one performance. This is surely a record? Departure after the second show at 2.30 a.m. for the over a thousand mile journey back east to Denver.

Here we came into the first of the quick weather changes that at first threatened to cause havoc with severe colds and 'flu casualities and added to the packing difficulties of trying to carry suitable clothes in the limited amount of luggage available while living on and off the train. The stormy conditions that prevailed on our departure from San Francisco had turned back once more into summer, but within an hour of leaving Sacramento we were in the deep snow covering the range of hills on the west side of Nevada. By the time we reached the great Salt Lake it was once more dark and then the climbing of the Rockies came before dawn. We had missed the best, but this most of us made up for with car trips as far as the Continental Divide deep in the mountains, during the next few days.

Oxygen to the Rescue

Arrived November 17th at 12.30 a.m. in Denver, Colorado. Four performances at Denver Auditorium, November 17th/19th. Another immense auditorium which could be used in the round, having seats back and front and on each side in the wings. Here, too, basket ball markings were in evidence on the stage, with a large brilliant amber circle well off centre bearing the auditorium's initials. The surface had a demoralising high shining surface, which luckily was not quite so terrifying from a dancer's point of view as it looked, having a comparatively sticky surface. A new side of touring made itself known to us in this mile high city—lack of oxygen and the consequent difficulty of losing one's breath on any exertion and worse still, I found, great difficulty and length of time in regaining it. It meant that one went on still out of breath from the previous entrance, a very heavy strain, so the services of a cylinder of oxygen and mask were engaged and the attendant raced these from one side of the stage to the other, relieving those most hard pressed with a few breaths of this invaluable element, as they left the stage.

After the first night's show the British Consul gave a party for us at the Windsor Hotel, which played such a great part in the early gold rush days of Colorado's history. At one time it had a bar which was paved with silver dollars and still has the portraits of many people of that time around its walls. College students gave an exhibition of Square Dancing, which I was interested to see, especially as it has many of its roots in the Scottish Dances which I have always been fond of and have studied in London.

The half-way party

November 18th marked the mid-way of this, our longest tour ever. This could not pass without some celebration, so a fancy dress party was organised among ourselves back at the hotel after that night's show. It turned out to be the greatest success lasting long into the early morning. There was a variety of costumes from Belisha Beacons and Siamese Twins to Colorado Beetles. I have never seen such invention with fancy dress at any time before. Many of us were up again after very few hours' sleep for the last day among the Rockies and a final look at the Red Rock Theatre, where a natural formation out of crop red sandstone has made a theatre, with acoustics so good that standing on the stage I was able to carry on a conversation with a friend at the back of the slope that held seats for some five thousand people, without raising my voice above normal

speaking pitch.

Departure 9 p.m. on the 19th November for Lincoln. Distance approximately 480 miles. Arrived in Lincoln, Nebraska 7 a.m. on November 20th. One performance at the University Coliseum the same day. The first ballet company to visit Lincoln. A slippery stage. We dressed in the lockers of the swimming pool which was situated just behind the stage. Naturally there were no mirrors, dressing tables or proper lights to assist making up, one just had to guess what it would look like under lighting. The wardrobe was down with us and put us on in costumes in good condition, in spite of the fact that they had none of the usual wardrobe facilities. On the stage there were no weights for the braces which hold the tall double sided flats, nor could the staff use the stage screws—they just had to be precariously balanced. Lighting capacity was 100 amps (enough for only ten of our 750 watt spots) and the auditorium's two lighting batons, consisting of 14 lamps of 250 watts. The total of that amount compared with the average 2,000,000 used to light Covent Garden stage gives some idea of the amount of light on the stage of that very large Auditorium, which extended a great way back from the stage, row after row of seats on a flat surface.

Departure for Des Moines, at 2 a.m. on November 21st. Distance approximately 136 miles.

Arrived in Des Moines, Iowa, at 6 a.m. on the 21st, one performance at the K.R.N.T. Theatre. We could get on to the stage for a class only just before the show.

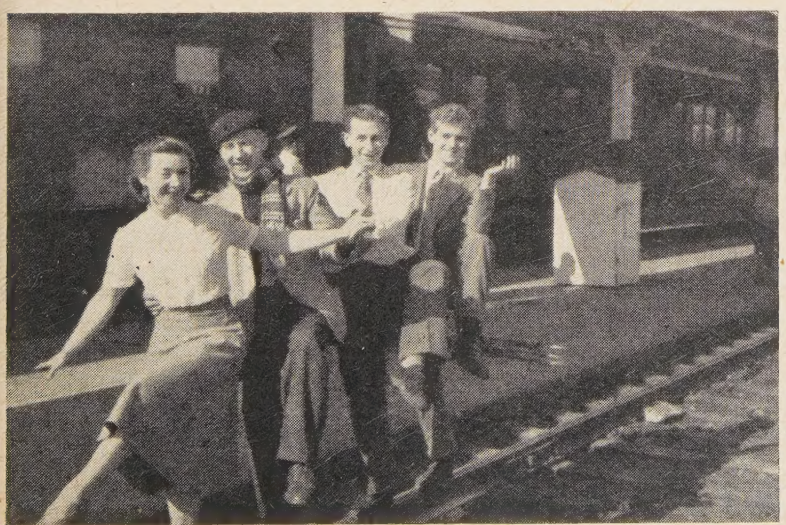
Departure 2 a.m. on the 22nd November for Omaha, distance approximately 80 miles.

Arrived in Omaha, Nebraska, at 6 a.m. Two performances at the Coliseum Theatre on November 22nd. Another hard day for the Company and staff, two shows on a one night stand. For the dancers it meant another

Photograph by Franklin White

ROBERT IRVING LOOKS ON WHILE MARGOT FONTEYN PRACTICES TIGHT-ROPE WALKING ON THE LINES DURING THE "HOT BOX" INCIDENT

short and bumpy night's rest and then a hard programme and the prospect of another late night followed by an early morning change of trains in the midst of a long journey. For the stage crew it meant, as usual, going to bed only when the scenery was finally loaded about 1.30 a.m. They then had to start unloading again as soon as the train arrived in Omaha, finish that job and set up for the 2.30 matinee of *The Rake's Progress*, *Les Patineurs* and *Wedding Bouquet* by 1.15, strike and load those ballets directly after the matinee, work the



RAIL BALANCING AT LITTLE ROCK ARE ANNE NEGUS, HARRY CHATTING (WARDROBE MASTER), HENRY LEGERTON AND FRANKLIN WHITE

Photograph by Bryan Ashbridge

evening show and have the lot loaded back on the train again for the 1 a.m. departure the same night

Not everyone thinks we are marvellous

Overheard in a restaurant between shows, when a party came in and settled down in silence at a nearby table to study the menu. This all important job done, a cigar lit, someone ventured a questioning "Well?". A long silence ensued while furs were adjusted and sundry fidgetings got all comfortably settled in their chairs; then another woman took up the thought, "Well all right, but . . . her partner". "I rather liked it, the first ballet was a bit of a bore and I didn't think much of the last thing but I rather enjoyed it". The second man: "Oh no, give me Benny Goodman any day". The hostess, looking from face to face, "Well, on the whole I think the opinion of the table is that a little goes a long way?"

The tour continues

Departure for Tulsa 1 a.m. on the 23rd November. Approximate distance 1,200 miles.

Thanksgiving Day, November 23rd, began officially while we were still in Omaha but by dividing days by the time one sleeps, the day started for us well before 7 a.m., getting up in readiness for the change of trains at Kansas City. We were about to change on to another line and our special train could not be taken on it. I have seen few things that looked quite so cold as the Missouri River covered with snow-decked chunks of muddy grey ice, as we crossed it just outside the station. Breakfast during the hour's wait and away again in three reserved day coaches tacked on to a scheduled train for Tulsa.

Arrived in Tulsa, Oklahoma at 2.15 p.m. November 23rd. One performance at the Auditorium on November 24th. A night off, the first night in a hotel and the first opportunity to have a bath, etc., since Denver — and we had been doing *Dante Sonata* quite a lot! What a relief to be in a stationary bed and no more of those interminable violent jolts all night. Latterly freight engines have been pulling us and they seem to have great difficulty in starting and stopping with anything like smoothness. Even heavy sleepers have been having disturbed rest and there are those who find the best of rolling stock inconducive to sleep at any time. Now for comfort for a night and I for one retired immediately on arrival and nearly slept the clock round. We had travelled about 1700 miles during the previous four nights and part of this day, and had given five performances. This time it was a very small auditorium. What a change after the enormous affairs holding up to 10,000 people which had become general with us by this time. There were no dressing rooms again, just three pretty well bare rooms which housed the wardrobe and where we all dressed. The stage was also small although this was not too new to us, as in spite of the large size of most of the auditoriums the stages were sometimes quite shallow, although very wide, which causes masking problems in preventing the audience from seeing into the wings. This one was narrow as well and heavily raked. The third act of *Le Lac des Cygnes* opened the programme, an act that has been used quite a lot by itself during these short visits. I left right after the first ballet but was told later of a little girl who in an interval had made her way through the low curtain dividing the orchestra pit and the audience and enquired there for Miss de Valois!

We perform in a Fair Ground

1 a.m. departure for Dallas, over five hundred miles south.

Arrived in Dallas, Texas, on November 25th at 9 a.m. Four performances at the State Fair Auditorium November 25th/27th. What a change in climate over night! It had been bitterly cold since we had got to Denver, sometimes deep snow, with ice and cutting wind usually predominant. Now we were back in summer again, blazing sun and deep blue sky: off came the winter woollies and back to shirt sleeves again. Dallas was crowded, so the Company was split up and put into four hotels, most of which were some miles on the opposite side of the town to the fair ground, which was as far on the other side. The Auditorium was right in the fair, a fantastic and large place which has grown up through the history of Dallas until it has become the State Fair of Texas. It is a mass of permanent show stands, outdoor auditoriums, theatres in the round, artificial pools, fun fairs, roller coasters and a complete dairy farm, to which a herd of cattle is brought for the twice daily milking. Also in the centre there is the famous Cotton Bowl Ball ground, where many of the big matches are played and at which I saw my first American version of the game.

Texan hospitality

People have been so kind to us throughout and here in Texas they live up to that State's reputation for hospitality. An instance is that of the Kingsbury's, who run a local ballet school, who on hearing that Bryan Ashbridge was having a birthday, arranged on the spur of the moment for a party plus cake and candles. They also heard me say that I had been unable to celebrate Thanksgiving and they specially got a turkey so that I should not entirely miss the national dish of that season. I also enjoyed working with their students and with the students of another ballet school, of which Dallas has several; they were extremely interesting to teach. Again the short season was very successful, good press and every one saying nice things. As for the houses, we have only had two houses on the whole tour that we have thought bad. They were both matinees, one in

Photograph by Duncan Melvin

WALTER GORE DEMONSTRATES THE HORRORS OF QUACK MEDICINE IN "THE GAY INVALID" AT THE GARRICK THEATRE

Omaha and the other in Winnipeg, when there was about a quarter of the seats empty. The rest of the time there has been capacity, in houses that hold up to 10,000 people, or on a few occasions there have been some side seats vacant which would have been difficult to see from anyway.

Departure 1 a.m. on November 28th for Oklahoma City. Distance about 200 miles.

Some more one-night stands

Arrived in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, at 8 a.m., one performance at the Auditorium on November 28th. The press had apparently invaded the train on arrival, for, on staggering out some time later I was confronted with the daily papers full of photos of the staff leaving for the day's work, dancers shaving and shots of heads appearing out of rows of sleepers, even a lone pair of ballet shoes did not miss their attention. It was here that a misprint in one of the papers reported that Miss de Valois had left us in San Francisco to return to London TWO YEARS ago! We had a studio for classes that day, that of Robert Bell, who after the show presented the company with fruit for the train, reminiscent of the cellist Piatagorski who did the same on the night of leaving Denver. What a long time ago that now seems; we have travelled so consistently and have done so much since then.

Departure for Memphis after the show at 12.30 a.m. distance about 600 miles.

Arrived in Memphis, Tennessee, 3.15 p.m. One performance at the Auditorium on November 29th. This was one of our shortest visits of the tour. For the programme of *Les Patineurs*, *A Wedding Bouquet*, *Black Swan* and *Checkmate* there was three and a half tons of scenery to be moved from the trucks, taken to the theatre, unloaded, the scenery hung, props and wardrobe unpacked and laid out in time for the show, all in five hours. In fact there was only just enough time to do it in, so none of us were wanted near back stage. The train was being transferred to another station so we could not stay in our sleepers and there was no studio to do any work, so a meal killed some of the time, leaving a few hours to wander around and see some of the town until at last we could get to the Auditorium in time to make up. Nor was there any space back stage for work once the show began, except behind the back cloth in the orchestra pit of the empty second hall of the two sided auditorium, where as I passed by during *Les Patineurs* I found that in one pit the orchestra played the music of *Les Patineurs* and in the other Mr. Plucis was taking Margot Fonteyn, Violet Elvin and Moira Shearer through *barre* work, with the Company dancing in the middle; how much a back cloth hides! After the show the staff took only until 12.30 to strip the stage, pack and reload the scenery and costumes, giving us time for a meal and once more we were on the move by 12.50 for the over one hundred mile trip to St. Louis.

One day's starvation

Arrived in St. Louis, Missouri, at 11 a.m. Five performances at the Kiel Auditorium December 1st/3rd. The train was late again and most of us had got up in time for the scheduled 8 a.m. arrival. Thoughts began to dwell on such things as coffee and eggs, but a shock awaited those who tried to use the dining car. Agreement had not been reached on a guarantee to cover any loss on the sale of breakfast, so we all had to sit around in a hungry state for the next three hours with the knowledge that a diner fully stocked for our needs was attached to our carriages. Even when we did get to St. Louis our first meal had to be put off until long after midday while a muddle over the hotel where the majority of the dancers were staying was partly cleared up. Apparently a telegram stating our time of arrival had got the a.m.s and the p.m.s mixed while on transit and we found that there were no rooms awaiting us. There was no one there who could look into this, so we had to get through a muddled procedure of the hotel staff trying to re-register us and check our copious amount of luggage, which completely swamped their facilities and caused rather chaotic conditions. Eventually, by

now very much the worse for wear, we got some food nearer tea time than breakfast and even a room by six in the evening. This all on the one day that we were supposed to have off as a day of rest.

We have a Circus as rivals

Another double sided Auditorium, only this time and for the first time we had the smaller of the two. On the other side there was a full scale circus performing simultaneously. Not much could be heard through the dividing iron curtain except the vibrant sound of the big drum and double explosion as two people were catapulted out of a cannon; it was as loud as a field howitzer and was deafening in every part of the building. Speculation ran high as to the funniest and most appropriate place that it could come during various ballets, such as the boy's *grand jeté* entrance in the Act 3 coda of *Lac* or his dramatic entrance in the last act, but we were frustrated in this idea as each time it came after the show or in an interval. Needless to say each company intermingled for as much time as long exits and acts off allowed. We would sit by the side of their band chatting to the magnificent family of tight rope walkers and watch a woman balancing at the top of a swaying pole up near the roof, the performing dogs, elephant and so on and they in turn crowded our wings often in full costume. It was rather nice to see Margot Fonteyn talking to a white faced dwarf clown between her first act entrances of *Sleeping Beauty*.

I left with the Company at 8 a.m. for Bloomington, some 150 miles distant having spent most of the night in the club.

"Hot Box" incident

On the way our engine developed a singularly named complaint, 'a hot box'; meaning that the oil in the axle box dries and the wheel seizes up. This happened in the middle of nowhere and took a couple of hours to rectify, giving all of us ample opportunity to try out the technique of our friends the tight rope walkers, on the slightly less elevated position of the railway tracks! Time was getting on and we had a performance that night, it began to look as if we would not get there in time for the scenery to be set, but all was well and we finally got going for the second time, having stopped immediately after the first attempt when someone noticed Alexis Rassine and Moira Shearer running along the sleepers after us.

I do an impromptu broadcast

Arrived in Bloomington, Indiana, at 3.30 p.m. Two performances in the Bloomington State University on December 4th/5th. Most of the Company lived in the hostel facilities of the campus (with the exception of the single boys who had to be banished to the town) near the rather lovely Auditorium. After the last show I was taken down to see the radio station and it was decided that I should be interviewed over the air. This went on between occasional records for the best part of an hour, with people telephoning in to ask questions, some of which I attempted to answer, until the studio door opened and in walked Mary Drage and Jane Shore, who had been out driving with some college boys and had tuned into my station by accident and their escorts brought them to the studio where they immediately joined in the broadcast. Time was nearing the end of the station's running for the night but on receiving a non-stop flow of telephone calls to assure us to the contrary, when one of us had suggested that no one was listening, the station was kept open an extra forty minutes and allowed time enough for Fiorella Keane to hear us and also come and join in! I have never known such wonderful informality at a radio station which would normally require a task force to crash into a programme. Properly brewed pots of tea and much conversation saw out the rest of that night so again I saw little of the journey along the flooded Wabash river next morning when the train eventually turned up around 11 a.m. for the 60 mile trip to Lafayette.

(To be continued)

Ballet Workshop Again

The second presentation was notable for an *esprit* by Walter Gore which he calls *Pastorale for Today*. It is the preliminary sketch for a ballet, danced by himself and Paula Hinton, in which we watch an idea coming to life with pauses while inspiration is awaited. The deft professionalism of the two dancers and the beauty and wit of the choreography make it an enchanting trifle. Gore hopes to be able to expand the idea to include other dances for a *corps de ballet*, still maintaining the "creation in rehearsal" motif. This is something to which we shall all look forward, although in its present form it will continue to delight.

The most ambitious item of the second programme was *Sappho*, a ballet by Frances James to a distinguished score by Michael Hobson, the company pianist. The set by Edward Hurst was impressive and so were some of the costumes, though others had an awkward dancing line and were ugly in colouring. Unhappily, an inexperienced choreographer was unable to handle a theme which needed someone of the calibre of Antony Tudor. Thanks to Joan McClelland's performance in the title role we could catch glimpses of what must have been the eternal tragedy of Sappho, doomed to loose her young votaries to the call of normal love, but the dances were without distinction and the entrances and exits were clumsy.

I would like to offer a word of advice to designers for small stages in intimate theatres. Lightly clad dancers look twice as naked at close quarters as they do in theatres of the usual size This is nothing to do with prudery but is simply a question of what is aesthetically pleasing and what is not. P.W.M.

DANCE NOTATION PUT TO THE TEST

By PAUL TASSOVIN

"KISS ME, KATE" IS THE FIRST AMERICAN MUSICAL SHOW TO HAVE THE DANCES SCORED; AND APART FROM SOME BALLETS OF KURT JOOSS, IT IS THE FIRST TIME THAT NOTATION HAS BEEN USED IN THIS COUNTRY TO RECONSTRUCT CHOREOGRAPHY

Sitting in the stalls at the Victoria Palace a few weeks ago, I witnessed a scene which must surely be unique and unprecedented in the history of dance in this country. I observed dancers engaged for the production of *Kiss Me, Kate* receiving their parts (like actors) from Dance Notator Ann Hutchinson, and a little later I saw an involved street scene come to life. In this case the dancers were reading from the stage plans of their movements. These plans are so simply and logically devised that anybody can read them without special instruction. The intricate patterns and complicated timing of this particular sequence in which the performers were all individual characters would seem a formidable task for anyone to remember or record, but Miss Hutchinson with her choreographer's score which looks like a cross between a conductor's score and a commander's map of tactical operations, clarified the complex movements in time and space without any fuss or bother.

Notation is largely thought of as a means of preserving great works for posterity. Miss Hanya Holm, distinguished choreographer and teacher of the modern dance, has realised the practical uses of notation and is to be congratulated on her foresight and pioneering spirit in commissioning the Dance Notation Bureau of New York to record her dances. She is now reaping the benefit, for the mental strain and physical effort of recreating the *Kiss Me, Kate* dances for the London production has virtually been dispensed with, and she is able to sit back at rehearsal and watch the dance come to life without lifting a finger, thereby gaining more time to supervise details of interpretation, style and expression that go into the moulding of the finished product.

How did these modern methods evolve? Why are they not more in use? What is the future of notation? These were some of the questions I propounded to Miss Ann Hutchinson, the young and enthusiastic director of the Dance Notation Bureau which is rapidly becoming known as a vital force in the progressive dance life of New York, and whose go-ahead policy is beginning to echo around the world.

The Dance Notation Bureau began very quietly in a very small way ten years ago. Since then the growth of interest and activity in the study of notation and in the scripting of dances and ballets has grown to quite remarkable proportions. Rather than concentrating solely on theoretical perfection in the development of

HANYA HOLM AND ANN HUTCHINSON RECONSTRUCT THE STREET SCENE FROM "KISS ME, KATE" FROM THE DANCE NOTATION SCRIPT

dance notation, the Bureau has endeavoured to make the system practical in order to serve present day needs. The eventual aim is to train the majority of dancers to read notation, and a number of specialists who will do the work of recording. Many American colleges are taking up the study, as well as the School of Performing Arts in New York, a vocational high school where a combined classical and modern dance education is given. Ballets recorded by the Bureau include six Balanchine ballets, and modern works by Doris Humphrey and Charles Weidman. Frederick Ashton's *Les Illuminations* composed for the New York City Ballet was also recorded. I am told that Mr. Ashton found the notator helpful during his rehearsals in checking or verifying movements, and when the dancers were not together, the notator was able to tell him from a glance at the score who was correct and who was not.

In discussing the difficulties of teaching notation Miss Hutchinson made light of what I had supposed would be manifold tiresome problems. She believes the teaching of notation must be linked with the teaching of movement; first the student explores the possibilities of movement (space, time dynamics, etc.) thus becoming aware of the necessity of recording in order to give a true description of what occurs, and, as he progresses and explores each development, he learns by analysis how to write it down. The notation has also been taught successfully by correspondence in America she assures me, although even allowing for her indefatigable drive and initiative I could not imagine her having much success 'through the post' in this country. Nevertheless while she is here Miss Hutchinson means to lose no opportunity to introduce notation to all who are interested.

These few facts about the study of notation are I think of interest: With one lesson a week, it takes a year to gain a comprehensive knowledge; but with two or three lessons a week a working knowledge may be obtained in three months. After thirty lessons it is possible to write down any ballet steps and usually students at this stage go and watch classes and rehearsals to practice writing the *enchaînements*.

Miss Hutchinson has greatly advanced the teaching of notation by organising material for reading studies, and by simplification of terminology she has devised a highly scientific method. One of her clever devices (it appealed to my sense of humour) aims at preventing subsequent pupils from making the same mistakes. From long experience she has learned all the regular mistakes that pupils of all ages make at various stages of the course, and in order to save time and to clarify each point as quickly as possible, she has compiled lists of 'common errors' to cover each period of the way and to keep the student on the correct course. As a result of teaching teen-agers, she has on hand catch phrases and rhymes to remind the students of the inevitable pitfalls.

It is encouraging to know that the dancers in the *Kiss Me, Kate* show here soon became intrigued by the weird plots and diagrams which make up the dance score and were soon enquiring: How does it work? Is it easy? Where can one learn it? They were encouraged to know that it is at present being taught in two dance schools in London, the Sigurd Leeder School of Modern Dance, and the School of Russian Ballet in Chelsea.

For several centuries dance notation has hovered in the background, ignored by all but the very few who for so long have grappled ineffectually with its baffling problems. Twenty odd years ago Rudolf Laban brought out his much improved system which at the time raised a bare ripple of interest. In the interim, thanks to the development of the system by many subsequent teachers and students, that ripple is at last developing into a wave that if encouraged might well engulf the world of terpsichore and bear it towards a more profitable realisation. That the much disparaged art of musical comedy should point the way of progress is in itself a condemnation of the self-complacency and lethargy of those who guide the course of ballet. May we hope that Miss Hutchinson's valiant efforts will bring us a little nearer to that far off era of dance literacy?

The Swedish Ballet

I DOUBT if any ballet company's reach ever exceeded its grasp to a greater extent than that of the company vaguely described as "The Swedish Ballet" which recently appeared at the Princes Theatre. The group's choreographer, Birgit Cullberg, attempted to translate into terms of ballet three monumental literary tragedies —the *Medea* of Euripides, Strindberg's *Miss Julie* and Kafka's *The Trial*. The results were, not surprisingly, extremely inadequate.

Miss Cullberg's greatest fault seemed to be the extraordinary mixture of styles which she employed. Her association with Jooss was apparent in some of the strong, free and naturalistic movements but she was not content to work in this idiom and added much from the vocabulary of classical ballet as well as some grotesque movements that seemed to derive from folk sources. She had little help from her designers and little from her dancers who were fighting—gallantly, to be sure—against chronic miscasting. Elsa-Marianne von Rosen has a delicate, lyric charm but is no tragedienne; Julius Mengarelli's talent appears to be for light comedy roles.

The motives of the impresarios responsible for presenting this company in the West End of London are incomprehensible. Do they not realise that in London every company faces comparison with the best of contemporary ballet (French and American as well as English) and that it is no testing ground for immature ventures? Such policies in the long run can only breed distrust of managements and pity for the poor dancers.

MARY CLARKE.

DOMINI CALLAGHAN AND DAVID PALTENGHI IN "SWAN LAKE" TELEVISED ON FEB. 5TH

Photograph by courtesy of the B.B.C.

TELEVISION SURVEY

By LISA GORDON SMITH

THE trouble with television is that it only offers one programme (yes, I know it cannot be helped at present!) and, as the majority of people seem to regard 'vision' as a new toy of which they mean to have every penny of their money's worth, they are apt to rise up and curse if every moment of the programmes does not give exactly what *they* want.

Whether or not their protests influence the programme planners, and, if so, to what extent, is one of those things which are "wropt in myst'ry" so far as I am concerned, and I dare not ask anyone to tell me, either, in case he, I and Uncle Tom Cobley find ourselves clapped in the Pygmalion Tower for contravening the Official Secrets Act!

Perhaps it is just coincidence that there have been no more experiments in teleballet since a few loud-penned balletophobes expressed their dislike of it all?

* * *

In the period with which I am now concerned, there have been only two programmes of serious ballet for adults and they were *Ballet for Beginners* Nos. 4 and 5 on January 10th and February 5th respecively.

Nobody can love more than I do this series which a fascinated and information-seeking friend of mine has rechristened "Ballet-for-the-Likes-of-Me" and nobody could have been ruder than I (though always well-meaning, of course) about some of the results of more far-reaching experiments.

All the same, do let us have more experiments—if only to give something to be rude about! Maybe they did not all give entire satisfaction, but the efforts involved were sincere and interesting. What about a second chance for some of those choreographers whose first experiments must have taught them a lot?

* * *

It is at least a comfort to know that TV has had the enterprise to form its own basic ballet group and to produce 'vision's' first resident ballerina.

Domini Callaghan (affectionately known as "Dom" to all concerned) is a dancer who has, hitherto, never been given the appreciation (nor the lighting) she deserves. Philip Bate saw her dancing with John Regan's Three Arts Ballet, noted the enormous development in her work, did a spot of his famous "visualising in broad sweeps"—and swooped!

So, Leeds born "Dom," properly produced, came into her own, and very beautiful she is, too.

Her partner, Michel de Lutry (who has all the ability for technical fireworks which we associate with French born dancers, plus the sincerity and capacity for hard work which does not, unfortunately, seem so prevalent among his compatriots) has not been seen so much on our screens recently; the reason being the fashionable influenza, which Michel had with the whole-hearted energy he brings to everything he does. It is good to be able to report that he is well again. He will, we hope, have demonstrated the fact before this is in print.

Quantities of "Davids" stood in for him in his

absence and appeared in their own right as well.

In January David Paltenghi ("commonly known as David P." to paraphrase a line from the early works of Miss Caryl Brahms) gave an excellent demonstration of Mime, including a "recap" of the invaluable TV Nursery Rhyme "This is the House that Man Built."

David Blair, who continues to make splendid progress in his artistic development, also played an excellent part in the now famous analysis of *Le Lac des Cygnes* Act 2 in February. This still remains the finest visual analysis there ever has been of any ballet. Felicity Gray, Philip Bate and the television ballet group should be encouraged to make a complete classical library of such analyses, which should then be filmed and stored in some suitable library for the use of dance students. Please, somebody, "consider" this!

* * *

By the time this is published the final *Ballet for Beginners* programme will have been televised. What of the future? Do we get "the mixture as before"? Or something equally interesting to take its place?

One thing we can be sure of is that the Felicity Gray-Philip Bate team do not lack ideas. Let us hope we see some of them!

POSTSCRIPT AND PREVIEW

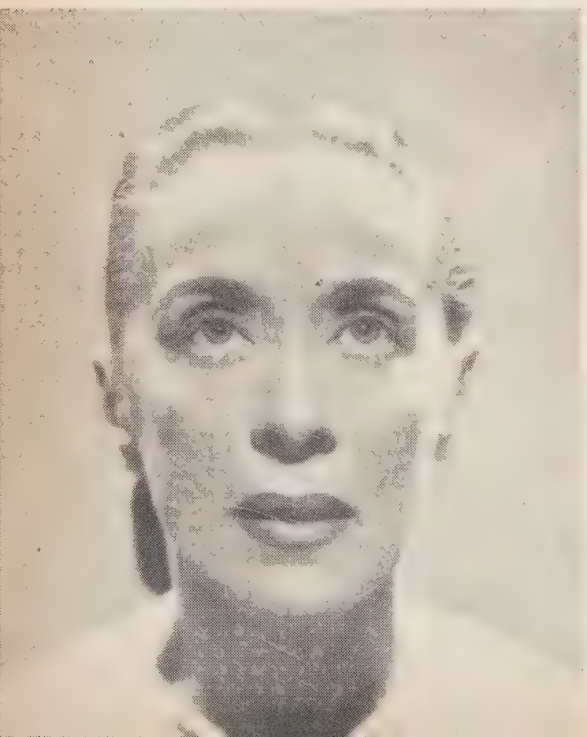
NEW YORK CITY WITNESSES NEW OPERA BALLETS, MARTHA GRAHAM'S SYMPHONIC DANCE SOLO, THE GALA RETURN OF BALLET THEATRE AND NEW YORK CITY BALLET'S SPRING SEASON, ETC.

By ARTHUR TODD

As detailed in the October issue of *Ballet Today*, the Metropolitan Opera Ballet has been revitalised under the direction of Ballet Theatre. According to this new working atrangement, Lucia Chase and Oliver Smith, co-directors of Ballet Theatre, signed a contract with Rudolf Bing, Manager of the Metropolitan Opera House, to supervise all dancing at the opera during the 1950-51 season. Anthony Tudor was appointed and is Ballet Master and head of the Ballet Theatre and Metropolitan Opera Ballet School with the very able assistance of Margaret Craske, one of the most esteemed teachers in America. Nana Gollner, one of Ballet Theatre's brightest stars, is prima ballerina at the Met and there is a *corps de ballet* consisting of twenty-five girls and eleven men, twenty-one of this number being new this season.

A NEW PICTURE OF MARTHA GRAHAM

Photograph by Chris Alexander



So far the most successful of the ballets in opera is the *Southern Roses Waltz* that Tudor choreographed for the new and very beautiful production of *Die Fledermaus*, which is, incidentally, the smash hit of the Met's current season. Here Tudor provided graceful and charming figurations for the *corps* and Nana Gollner, who also plays the speaking role of Ida, sister of Adele. The fourteen girls in the *corps* are beautifully costumed in pastels and they are supported by eight men. The *corps* is youthful, good-looking and fresh and one can expect a continued growth through experience from this ensemble.

Martha Graham in "Judith"

Martha Graham made her first public appearance of the season in late December at Carnegie Hall with the Louisville Symphony Orchestra when she was guest soloist in *Judith* to an especially commissioned score by William Schuman. This occasion was reason for rejoicing for it found our greatest modern dancer in top

rm, completely recovered from the disastrous leg injury suffered in Paris last summer and which caused e cancellation of the London season.

Martha Graham's danced "character stems from dith, one of the most noble great women of the Bible. *dith* is the fourth book of the Apocrypha". This solo nce covers the period between when "Holofernes ok the waters and fountains of waters of the children Israel" up to the time when Judith "took his (Holo- rnes) head from him . . . and said: . . . 'I will sing nto the Lord a new song'." This retelling of Judith's ncounter and decapitation of Holofernes proved to be ramatically stirring, especially so in Miss Graham's rtuosic dance of victory which was magnificently elated to the climax of Mr. Schuman's score.

As a tour de force, *Judith* is an outstanding feat of chnical and theatrical virtuosity. Though it lacks me of the theatre elements that may be found in Miss raham's works for a company on a full stage, it must, owever, be considered as yet another forward step in er ceaseless pioneering and invention. The stage space or the dance presented certain technical problems ecause the orchestra filled the rear section of the stage nd they were screened off from the remaining narrow ath in front. However, by employing Noguchi's bstract motifs at either side of the stage and by creating many diagonal and side-wise dance phrases, Martha Graham brilliantly overcame her stage limitations. Save for what seemed an overlong preoccupation in the changing and rearranging of part of her costume and headgear, she filled the remainedr of the work with her customary magnificence of movement.

Ballet Theatre's Return

Early in January, ballet came into its own again in New York, for at least one night, when Ballet Theatre played a gala welcome home-coming at the Met on January 9th, before starting off the next day on their tour which will not return them to New York until April. A gala audience, including Mrs. Truman and her daughter, society figures and diplomatic representatives and dance, stage and screen luminaries welcomed our best and most balanced ballet company home again. And a gala evening it was indeed with Igor Youskevitch making a double triumph in *Theme and Variations* opposite the brilliant Mary Ellen Moylan and again with the dynamic Alicia Alonso in *The Black Swan pas de deux*. Certainly there is no male classical ballet dancer who can top Mr. Youskevitch and it was wonderful to see him again. It was equally wonderful to see again what Nora Kaye can do with *Fall River Legend* while she is on stage and Lucia Chase gave her finest performance of the Stepmother that we have yet witnessed in New York. Interesting, too, was the opportunity to see James Mitchell in the Hugh Laing role in *Fall River Legend* and also in *Rodeo* with Allyn McLerie. Both Mitchell and Miss McLerie were

Photograph by Serge Leblang

ANTONY TUDOR REHEARSING THE METROPOLITAN OPERA HOUSE CORPS DE BALLET FOR "FAUST"

creditable but hardly more, especially when one recalls Hugh Laing's dramatic intensity in *Fall River Legend* or when one remembers either de Mille herself or Dorothy Etheridge as the Cowgirl in *Rodeo*. The *corps* appeared in much better condition than when seen last spring in New York. However, one wishes that one of Tudor's masterworks might have been included in place of one of the two de Mille works and certainly Hugh Laing and the lyrically lovely Dianna Adams were very much missed. Otherwise, it was in every sense a gala evening.

Pearl Primus

Aside from the aforementioned events, an exceptionally interesting performance must be mentioned. This was Pearl Primus' first full scale dance programme since her African sojourn, which she and her newly formed company put on for two sold-out performances at the Y.M. and Y.W.H.A. in New York. Highlights were three new group numbers—*Excerpts From An African Journey*, *The Initiation* and *War Dance*, all based on Miss Primus' recent dance discoveries in Africa. These dance works had an artistic form and honesty that is not often found in primitive dance, which is so often over-theatricalised, and they also had great force as theatre pieces. Obviously, Pearl Primus' journey to Africa has provided her with a rich treasure of authentic material and it has likewise given her a new maturity and greater

Photograph by Jack Mitchell

PEARL PRIMUS

objectivity in her purely American themes. Certainly she is one of the most vital forces in the younger generation of dancers in America and it is a pleasure to see her making such praisworthy artistic progress.

Sadler's Wells Last American Performance

Finally, Sadler's Wells Ballet was again on the scene, close to New York, when they played a gala farewell appearance at the Community Center at White Plains. Those fortunate enough to obtain standing room (the seats were sold out months ago) report that Margot Fonteyn in *Le Lac des Cygnes* even excelled her opening night performance in this ballet at the Met earlier in the season and this estimate of her continually expanding artistry is also verified by those who saw her performances in Chicago and Boston. Certainly Margot Fonteyn is *the* great classical ballerina of our era and America at large was indeed fortunate to get still another glimpse of her artistry on television, where she appeared in *The Black Swan* with the splendid partnering of Michael Somes before leaving for London. Moira Shearer also appeared on television in New York, dancing the *grand pas de deux* from the third act of *The Sleeping Beauty*, and she created another very fine impression on all those who have been thrilled by her steady growth and maturity since 1949.

New Season of New York City Balle

Opening its major season in mid-February, the New York City Ballet Company commenced an engagement that may well be the most vital and historic in its career. The first night of its sixth season included four of the most popular ballets in the repertoire—Jerome Robbins' *Age of Anxiety*, William Dollar's *The Duel* and Balanchine's *Bourrée Fantasque* and the *Sylvia: Pas de Deux*. The honours of the evening were shared about equally by Melissa Hayden, who gave quite her most compelling performance to date in *The Duel*; Maria Tallchief, whose superb virtuosity is so well set off in the *Sylvia Pas de Deux* and Jerome Robbins, whose special gifts lent added intensity to his own *Age of Anxiety*. Robbins, who appeared in a few performances at the early part of the season, while choreographing the dances for *The King and I*, the new Rodgers and Hammerstein musical, also restored the precisely needed touch to his original role in *Bourrée Fantasque*, an element that was lamentably missing during the earlier

MELISSA HAYDEN WHOSE WORK IS BEING ACCLAIMED BOTH BY CRITICS AND PUBLIC IN NEW YORK

son when the role was given a Broadway accent by Harold Lang.

The first *première* of the season took place on February 15th, when Balanchine's revised version of *The Card Game*, to music by Stravinsky, was presented. This ballet, representing cards in a poker game, was originally given for two performances at the Metropolitan Opera House in April, 1937, at which time it was commissioned by and composed for the American Ballet. (In 1940 this work was revived as *Poker Game* by the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo for a cast including Franklin, Danilova, Markova, Krassovska, Youskevitch and Eglevsky.) This year's reincarnation, though spiritedly performed by Janet Reed, Patricia Wilde, Doris Breckenridge, Herbert Bliss, Francisco Moncion and Todd Bolender, must be classed as a disappointment since the original flaws in the work are still inherent. Choreographically, the ballet is static and the elements of design and movement are further limited by the costumes which represent playing cards. Moreover, Stravinsky's less than felicitous score by Stravinsky seems thin, dry and, at times, like over-orchestrated Poulenc. As far as movement is concerned, the final section is repetitious and, indeed, seems dated. As a matter of fact, one can recall several instances where the great Balanchine has since surpassed this frivolous ballet in his often inventive choreography for Broadway. Incidentally, Mr. Balanchine has just been engaged to stage the dances for *Courtin' Time*, a new musical with an American background, which went into rehearsal on March 8th.) *The Card Game* has not had a critical success and, according to an after-performance statement by a ranking executive of the New York City Center, it may possibly be withdrawn from the repertoire before the end of the current season.

One hit more or less, however, in no wise seems to diminish the wonderful performances that are being given by the *corps* and by most of the soloists. So far, Melissa Hayden has been nothing short of superb in every role that she has appeared in and, in consequence, her growing legion of followers are especially looking forward to her first appearance in *Firebird*, which will occur later in the season. Herbert Bliss, completely recovered from a minor back injury, has been giving quite the most distinguished performances in the male classical wing while Francisco Moncion has likewise maintained his own individualistic dramatic interpretations in top fashion. Also noteworthy have been Diana Adams' glowing rendition of Sacred Love in *Illuminations* and Tanaquil Le Clercq's magnificent performance in the Second Movement Adagio in *Symphony in C*.

Young English Choreographer's First Work

The Sunday evening prior to the New York City Ballet's return, the Choreographer's Workshop offered a "laboratory programme" at the Humphrey-Weidman studio which was "presented to show a variety of dance styles and give encouragement and opportunity to choreographers and dancers at different levels of development". Quite the most professional work on this programme was *Hide and Seek*, a new ballet by David Vaughan, set to Roy Douglas' arrangement of music by Sir William Walton. Young Mr. Vaughan, a recent arrival in America from London, who is on a special scholarship at the School of American Ballet, chose a children's party at the turn of the century in England as the subject for his charming little ballet. This work was composed on a cast consisting of students and graduates of the School of American Ballet. Besides dancing a delightful character variation in his own ballet, Mr. Vaughan showed a keen sense of characterisation in his choreography for the rest of the company. Moreover, he appears to be blessed with a fine sense of form and structure. Undoubtedly he is a gifted young man of whom we may be hearing more.

JEROME ROBBINS AND THE BALLET OF IDEAS

By JANET SINCLAIR

THE art of ballet being a comparatively young one, and ballet itself being a combination of more than one art, it is hardly surprising that in ideas it lags so far behind the novel and the legitimate stage; it was not until the early thirties, when Jooss and Tudor began working, that any reaction to the realism of Zola, Ibsen and Shaw in other spheres made itself felt in the ballet theatre. This is easy to understand when one considers how much ballet is a thing of tradition, and the resistance by purists, both in the audience and on the stage, to innovations is usually acute.

However, we all know that art must progress if it is not to go backwards. Today, nearly all forms of artistic creation are looked on primarily as expressions of the artist's personality—we say he is expressing himself through his work. This is a comparatively new idea, and it was inevitable that sooner or later the idea would begin to extend itself to the creation of ballets. Fokine ripped off the superficial conventionalities of ballet as it existed in Czarist Russia, and once he had done this and established the essential principle of creating a spectacle consistent in all its components, he opened the path to

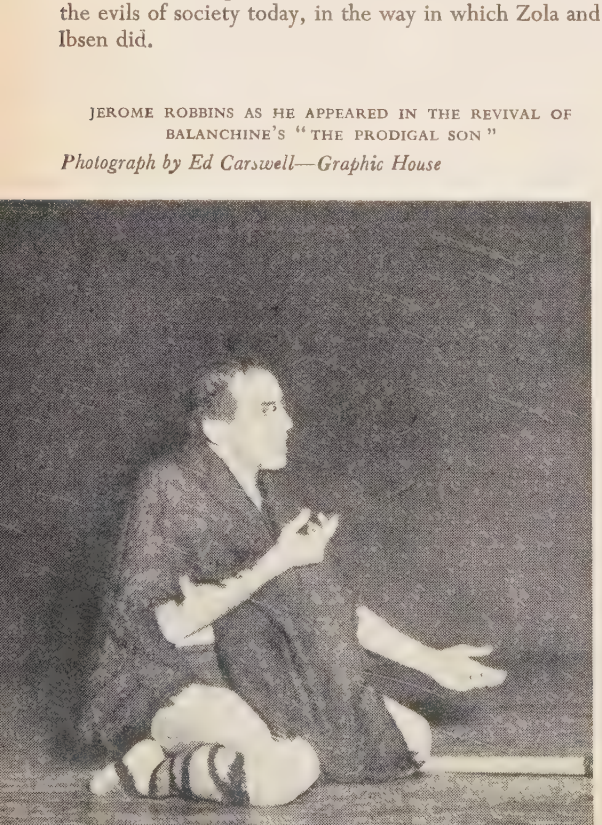
those who would carry the art a stage further and make of it a medium through which the artist can attack his own problem.

In the early thirties, two new tendencies manifested themselves. Massine produced his sensational "symphonic" ballets in an abstract medium: Jooss began to create works concerned with live human beings of the present day. Today, nearly twenty years after, ballet is split into two parts, each of which sprang, whether consciously or unconsciously, from one of these two influences, and in the present discussion we can safely leave M. Balanchine creating his beautiful and moving patterns in an abstract vacuum and consider the more progressive angle.

Jooss was the first choreographer of the twentieth century to concern himself with personal experience of life as he saw it. *The Green Table* was an acute reaction to the problem of war today with its attendant evils of conscription, profiteering, starvation: Jooss had had ample opportunity to observe the harvest of war while a student during the economic collapse of Germany, and had the courage to attempt the translation of his observations into balletic form. In Jooss' work we observe to the full the reactions of the creator who, not content with the old fashion of seeking for a story (fairy-tale, classic or otherwise) which would work up into a good ballet, seeks instead to create a new idiom in which he can pour out his own reactions to life and the evils of society today, in the way in which Zola and Ibsen did.

JEROME ROBBINS AS HE APPEARED IN THE REVIVAL OF BALANCHINE'S "THE PRODIGAL SON"

Photograph by Ed Carswell—Graphic House

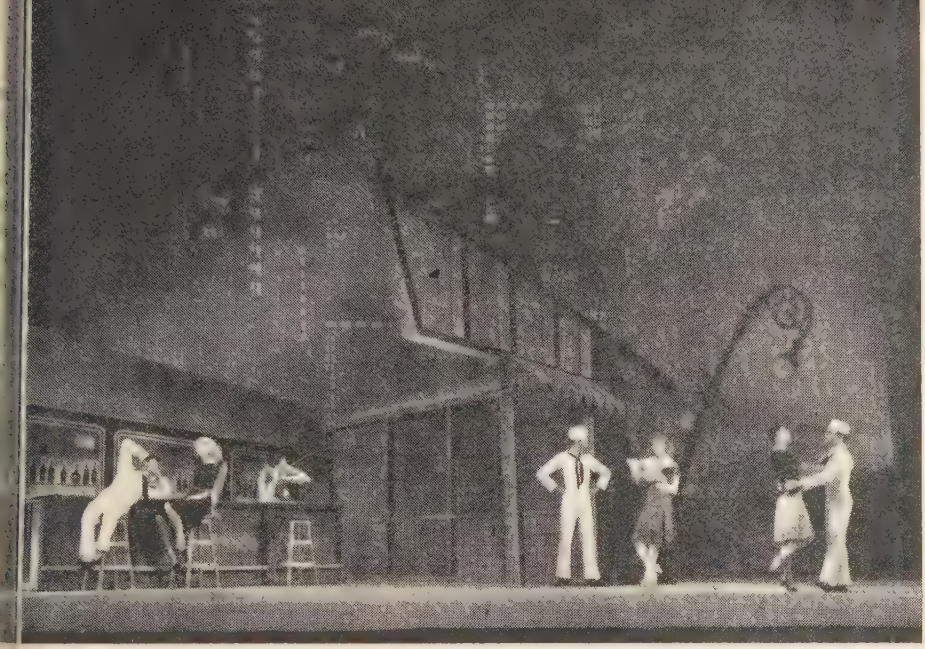


This new approach to ballet as a medium for personal expression was also found in the work of Anthony Tudor, although it was not until the 'forties, with *Pillar of Fire* and *Undertow*, that he concerned himself with contemporary people and their reactions to the problems of present-day living. *Dark Elegies* may be cited here in contradiction, but in fact this ballet is entirely outside space and time and deals with a situation common to humanity since the days of the cave-men.

Neither Jooss nor Tudor, however, have been interested exclusively in contemporary life: the former's output is almost equally divided between the current commentary of *The Green Table*, *Big City*, *The Mirror*, *Chronica*, *Pandora*, on one side, and the "telling a story" ballets in the Fokine convention of *Prodigal Son*, *Ball in Old Vienna*, *Seven Heroes*, *Spring Tale* and *Company at the Manor*: and Tudor's work shows a higher proportion of non-contemporary themes than does that of Jooss: it has been for a young American, Jerome Robbins, to show the ballet audience how varied and moving can be the work of one who, so far as his works shown in London go, has chosen to deal solely with present-day living people, and to say good-bye to the nineteenth century romantic convention which idealises its characters and refuses to look any unpleasant or sordid situation straight in the face.

This young man first burst upon the world of ballet with the production in New York of his *Fancy Free* (1944) and when Ballet Theatre came to London in 1946 this ballet was the outstanding success of the season—indeed, to the majority of the audience *Ballet Theatre=Fancy Free*, although in the opinion of the present writer *Interplay*, added to the repertoire in 1945, is the more satisfying entity and the better ballet. Both works displayed a fertility of invention, a wit and a refreshing absence of sentimentality that marked their creator out as the possessor of extraordinary gifts, and it was exhilarating to see a choreographer interested in the potentialities of his male cast, not solely concerned with displaying his female dancers and content to throw in a few hackneyed *entrechats*, *jetés* and double turns for the men. Indeed, in *Fancy Free* and *Interplay* the female dancers are overshadowed by the virtuosity of their male companions, a pleasant change from the run of contemporary ballets.

English audiences unfortunately have a limited view of Robbins' work: five ballets, one collaboration with George Balanchine, and one short-lived musical comedy—about half the output of his six years' work. This gives us a somewhat lopsided approach to his compositions and creates a possibly entirely imaginary schism between the earlier happy Robbins of *Fancy Free* and *Interplay* and the more serious intellectual approach of *Facsimile*, *The Guests* and *The Age of Anxiety*. To us this break appears so great a revolution in outlook that one seeks for some important new influence in the chore-



ROBBINS' FIRST BALLET "FANCY FREE" WHICH WAS CREATED IN 1944

Photograph by Baron

rapher's life: Mr. Robbins himself, however, merely ribes it to the simple process of growing up. In lite of this, however, one must not by comparison fail consider the early, light ballets as mature works, for ough their subjects are slight their creative technique ows an adult mastery of the medium and an unusual ck of sentimentality. In the two *pas de deux* of these rly ballets one can feel the tenderness of the creator wards his characters, but between the characters emselves in each case there is little or no sentiment or romantic approach: they never forget to laugh at themselves, their independence of each other remains unshaken. Robbins has a great capacity for resisting the temptation to idealise his characters: for instance, in creating the "three wonderful guys", as they have been called, of *Fancy Free* he includes one little episode entirely in character that most choreographers would have omitted—the three sailors shouldering each other out of the way to crowd ungallantly into the bar, leaving the girls to follow them. He has infinite capacity for

AGE OF ANXIETY" REATED IN 1950 IS IN TRIKING CONTRAST TO HE HAPPY EXTROVERT IOOD OF "FANCY REE"

Photograph by Graphic House

making his audience understand the reactions of his subjects, and identify themselves with them: one feels one has known his characters all one's life, and taken them for granted until some outside viewpoint revealed their validity as grown-up human beings. One wonders how many women there are who could state honestly that, whether they liked *Facsimile* or loathed it, it did not make them feel faintly uncomfortable?

It is with human beings that Robbins appears to be primarily concerned, and it is this attidude which makes his work, both in past achievement and potentially for the future, so revolutionary. He shares with Balanchine the view that the very presence of dancers on the stage creates dramatic tension: while one cannot always agree with him here—though it was undoubtedly true of *Choreartium*—he himself obviously possesses infinite capacity for portraying dramatic relationships between people and contemporary life without straining either the credulity of his audience or the dancing flow of the movement. In every one of Robbins' ballets that London has seen, he is dealing with contemporary ideas and problems and present-day people, and in that he is unique. In his own appearances on the stage he hands us not only the key to his own personality—this is inevitable with dancers—but the key to his work and to his approach to choreography. On the stage he is a live human being: his performances, conceived in the round, can make nearly everyone else on the stage appear a two-dimensional silhouette; this was noticeably the case with his *Petrouchka* in 1946. And his ballets, too, are conceived in the round; there are no concessions to romantic myths, sylphs, fairies or visions; and it is this grasp of the realities of present-day life, this wish to adapt the framework of ballet today to display them, combined with his almost terrifying observation, his invention and his detachment, which make his work the most important of the past decade and the most potentially important of the next half-century.

HOW DANCERS ARE TRAINED AT THE MOSCOW SCHOOL (2)

By ELENA ROSLAVLEVA

ONCE every three months a methodist records in writing the sequence of the lesson of all the teachers in the school. Alla Arsenieva meanwhile regularly records Kojukhova's lessons, as they are used for special study. Every teacher in the school receives from the methodological department a *calendar plan* for the month or term. At the end of the term their work is checked, to see whether the pupils have actually made the progress requested by the plan. Here is a plan for the girl's seventh class.

1st Quarter of the year.

Strive to attain a good *demi-plié* for all of the class.

Allegro: all movements according to the programme of the 7th class, but at a slower tempo, for the purpose of their improvement and "clean" execution.

Pointes.

2nd Quarter.

Perfection of all the material. Working out of softness and expressiveness of the hands and arms.

More attention to artistic expression of the body.

Pointes.

Fouetté 45 degrees.

Tours chaînés.

3rd Quarter.

All movements done at a quicker tempo. Scenic perfection of all the material.

4th Quarter.

Further perfection of all acquired movements.

Pieces from ballets: two variations of Kitri's friends from *Don Quichotte*, and *pas de trois* and the would-be brides' variations from *Swan Lake*.

Incidentally in connection with the study of extracts from classical ballets the methodological department organises in many classes listening to classical ballet music, played by school pianists and often by the pupils themselves.

This is the plan, based on the class programme. Programmes are worked out by specialists and approved by higher educational authorities. For each class, each term, each month or even week of the year the teacher knows exactly how much material has to be passed in the class. The plan tells her in what manner should this material be treated.

But the teacher is given not merely a technical educational task. A teacher of a Soviet school has general educational problems facing him or her. The teacher's plan gives the additional task of:

1. Education of respect for seniors and for each other.
2. Acquiring rules of good conduct.

The goal set by the management of the school is to elevate it to as high a cultural plane as possible. For this purpose everything is directed towards development of taste, cleanliness (all small children have to show their fingernails regularly) in appearance and clothes. Much attention is paid to an alert smart appearance, because a slovenly person will never make a good actor.

Education does not stop with pupils alone. Teachers

UKRANIAN DANCE
NG PERFORMED BY
H GRADE STUDENTS
THE BOLSHOI BALLET
HOOL. THE DANCERS
E Y. RAKHMANOV,
TSUKANOV AND A.
USHKIN

e being constantly instructed in developing their ersonalities and willpower in a manner enabling them o influence the pupils, impress their will upon them. the teacher fails in thus impressing the class, the upils cease believing in their own ability to achieve uccess in the difficult profession they have chosen. hat the profession is very difficult has been proved by ie medical section. Groups of people from the heaviest professions were examined and it was found that by the burden which the organism receives during dancing and exercising, ballet is the heaviest profession of all. The pulse of ballet dancers after a difficult variation reaches 330 points, something that could not be stood by a person with no training. A problem which has not yet been theoretically solved is that of breathing in classical ballet. It is not like gymnastics where each

A LESSON IN THE FOURTH CLASS AT THE BOLSHOI BALLET SCHOOL

ANNA ROJE AS THE BRIDE IN THE YUGOSLAV BALLET BY OSCAR HARMUS, "THE LEGEND OF OHRID". THE YUGOSLAV BALLET WILL APPEAR THIS YEAR AT THE EDINBURGH FESTIVAL

Photograph by Fotosluzba Hrvatske

part of the exercise may be coordinated with inhaling and exhaling. It seems, therefore, that the only way for ballet dancers is to do separate breathing exercises and learn to use the full capacity of their lungs.

It is now planned to reorganise the general educational programme of the ballet school so that it fully equals the ten-year intermediary education. Then pupils who towards the end of the stay in the school prove to be unfitted for ballet (and such things happen quite often when children enter their 'teens) will easily be able to enter any college or university. As a rule such pupils, who could not be made into dancers, become either teachers or historians of ballet, and enter the Theatre Institute.

It is expected that a new reform of choreographic education resulting in its further deepening and strengthening will follow in the near future.

This reform will embrace, of course, not only the Moscow school, but all other schools which work on the same lines, the two central schools, in Moscow and Leningrad, serving as examples.

I have not touched here some other, no less important parts of the school's programme, such as the eurythmics ably conducted by Vera Yevseyevna Yanovskaya, or the Historical Dance—a class headed by Margarita Vassilievena Vassilieva who recently received the scientific degree of *docent* (professor's assistant) for the painstaking research she has done in the field of historical ballroom dances such as *branle*, *pavane*, *rigaudon*, etc. The Moscow school is definitely leading in the method and scope of teaching these subjects.

Three Ballets for Festival Year

The Arts Council have commissioned scores for three new ballets to be presented during Festival Year. *Tiresias* by Constant Lambert, who is also writing the scenario, will be produced at the Royal Opera House during the summer, with choreography by Frederick Ashton, while it has recently been announced that the Rambert Ballet will première a ballet based on the Prologue to the Canterbury Tales during the Canterbury Festival in July. This will have choreography by David Paltenghi and a decor by Edward Burra, while the music will be by Peter Racine Fricker whose work has recently been attracting considerable attention.

First of the three ballets to be presented will be John Cranko's *Harlequin in April* due at Sadler's Wells Theatre on May 8th. The music for this is by Richard Arnell, the young English composer who has already composed the score for a ballet in the repertoire of the New York City Ballet. This is *Punch and the Child* which Sir Thomas Beecham is shortly recording. I am told that the title must not be taken literally, for although Harlequin, Colombine and Pierrot all appear, the story is not in any sense based on the Commedia dell'Arte characters; Harlequin is rather a symbol of Man from childhood to maturity.

Three important scores such as these in one year make a very rare event in English Ballet and we shall all hope that this will be the beginning of a new era, for the use of existing music is becoming more and more a threadbare makeshift.

BALLET VOCABULARY (2)

Compiled by LEO KERSLEY and JANET SINCLAIR

BALLON should not be confused with ELEVATION. *Ballon* is a quality of movement by which the impression is given that the dancer, by a reversal of the laws of gravity, is continuously thrown off the ground instead of pushing himself away from it. Some dancers have only a slow *ballon*, some a quick (and some none at all).

It is *ballon* which is so remarkable in the jumps of Babilée and Grant.

* * *

BALLONNE

A *ballonné* is rather like a sigh. It is usually begun with one foot touching the ankle (or knee) of the other leg: the dancer then springs into the air, at the same time extending the bent leg from the ankle or knee to the front, side or back, and returning it on landing. This movement can also be performed rising on to the toes instead of jumping, or jumping with a turn.

* * *

BALLOTTE

In *ballotté* in front, the dancer stands on one foot with the other stretched out behind him and springs up from the supporting leg, bending both legs up beneath him; on descending he lowers the back foot to the ground and elegantly extends what was the supporting foot in front. In *ballotté* behind, he immediately springs up again, bringing both feet beneath him as before, landing on the leg which had been extended in front, and replacing the other leg in arabesque. These two steps are usually performed in a series, creating a swaying movement. Hence the name of *jeté bateau* used in the French School.

Immediately after the flower episode in the opening scene of *Giselle*, Giselle and Albrecht do four *ballottés* (front, back, front, back) and then a *ballonné* to the side, a step, and a *jeté* in front. They then repeat the whole sequence to the other side.

* * *

BARRE

At the beginning of every class dancers must perform a series of exercises, holding a horizontal rod or BARRE about three feet from the floor, designed to prepare the body for the many kinds of strain and effort to follow, and without which the danger of accidents is increased. For this reason dancers will often "do a *barre*" before performing.

An example of this is shown in the first scene of *Gala Performance*.

* * *

BATTERIE covers all beaten steps—*brisés*, *cabrioles*, *entrechats* and steps *battu*: when the word BATTU (beaten) is added to a step, this does not mean that the form of the step has changed, but that it has become more sparkling by beating the calves together during the movement. Certain *assemblés*, *échappés*, *fouettés*, *jetés*, *sauts de basques*, *sissonnes* and *tours en l'air* can be beaten. (See *Assemblé* and *Temps de Poisson*, and *Echappé*).

(To be continued)

Pamela May — Pin-up Girl

A new poster issued by the National Savings Committee and "inspired" by Pamela May is proving a great success—particularly with the Forces for whom she is rapidly becoming Number One Pin-up Girl.

Wedding Bells

Just as we were going to press came news from America that Nora Kaye is to marry Jerome Robbins on April 16th. They sail for Europe two days later. These two artists are greatly admired in this country and all ballet lovers will wish them every happiness.

Congratulations also to Domini Callaghan and Michel de Lutry who have recently announced their engagement.

The photograph on the cover was taken by Bryan Ashbridge just before a performance of "Les Patineurs" during the American tour of Sadler's Wells Ballet. The dancers are Nadia Nerina, Rowena Jackson and Brian Shaw

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